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ABSTRACT

This three-part report includes a justification for the college-level study of interpersonal communication, a description of a specific course that includes interpersonal communication, and an outline for supplemental lectures on interpersonal communication for basic speech communication courses. The overall rationale for the stress on teaching interpersonal communication within or in addition to basic college speech courses is based upon the new, less culturally bound transactional communication theories. The course described demonstrates ways of teaching speech skills which conform to this view of communication. A proposed series of videotaped lectures by experts in various facets of communication which could supplement regular speech courses is also described. (CH)

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APPROACHES TO TEACHING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

(A Symposium)

31st Annual Convention
New York State Speech Association
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by

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CS 500 606

WHY INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION?--ROUND II

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(Presented at the 31st Annual Convention of the New York State Speech Association, March 18-20, 1973, Monticello, New York)

The recent Ilardo article[1] has set forth definite positions that interpersonal communication is a distinct academic discipline apart from public speaking and that interpersonal communication is a course through which departments of speech serve "as agents under whose auspices a sort of mass therapy occurs"[2] by helping students to, among other things, cope with the ever increasing rapidity of change in society. It is the contention held here that interpersonal communication is the complement of public speaking and that interpersonal communication is not a process of group therapy but rather the academic study of how one's values and self identity have been formed through face-to-face interaction.

If one begins with our culture's answers to the question "Why does man communicate?" it is possible to discern a cultural bias in our models of communication. It is generally agreed that our culturally determined view of self is one of potency to affect our phenomenology, i.e. man as being able to act upon his environment.[3] Our dominant communication models reflect more of our world view than they reflect the universal process of communication. The Berlo SMCR model is unidirectional and focuses on the source's attempts to manipulate a receiver. Even the added concept of feedback can be viewed as the monitoring of the receiver's responses. Our cultural concept of the communication process has always been a culture-bound view with the implication of a discernible source who began the "process." Our models and teaching of public speaking have reflected this view of a communication source attempting to manipulate the behavior of receivers and to evaluate his success through feedback.

Interpersonal communication first came to us through the selective reading of Maslow, Rogers, Schutz, and May by well-intending speech communication trained educators who have given us a perspective on human communication which forces us to accept as the model of communication a model of the therapeutic encounter. Maslow, Rogers, et al. never did nor did they intend to present a theory of universal communication. Interpersonal communication taught in this mode is not related to the historical development of our discipline and is not within our competency to teach as an academic discipline--witness our reliance upon "games" and "exercises."

Our discipline is learning to cope with the less culture-bound transactional process models, such as presented years ago by Barnlund[4] and more recently by Mortensen.[5] To accept a transactional model one must, in a sense, refuse to label a source in the sense of the word as the discipline has used it. To accept that one cannot label a source in a communication transaction is the first step to understanding communication as a transaction.

Interpersonal communication is a part of the traditional speech communication discipline. It is that part through which one learns how he as a unique individual became who he is through interpersonal contacts and, as such, complements that part of our discipline through which one learns how he can affect the values and behaviors of many others through verbal discourse and how he can analyze messages directed to him as part of a mass audience.

What I am proposing is not just a different perspective; I am proposing an entirely different orientation. Thus, in the classroom instead of attempting to learn through discussion and/or exercises how one affects a member of another race, I propose students attempt to discover how they have been and are now affected by transracial contacts. As defined here, the sources of interpersonal communication can be found in Plato, Marx, Mead, Burke, and perhaps the contemporary Jurgen Habermas of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, as well as Maslow, Rogers, et al. What I am proposing is a model of interpersonal communication related to models of the socialization process, i.e. the continuing process through which each individual acquires awareness of his uniqueness.

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[1] Joseph A. Ilardo, "Why Interpersonal Communication?" The Speech Teacher, 1972, 21:1-6.

[2] Ilardo, p. 4.

[3] Edward C. Steward, American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. (Dimensions of International Education, No. 3) Pittsburgh: Regional Council for International Education, 1971.

[4] Dean C. Barnlund, "A Transactional Model of Communication," in Foundations of Communication Theory, edited by Kenneth K. Sereno and C. David Mortensen, New York: Harper & Row, 1970, pp. 83-102.

[5] C. David Mortensen. Communication: The Study of Human Interaction. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972, pp. 14-16 and 376-377.

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1973

Speech Communication 101: Interpersonal Communication

Objectives. The basic speech communication course at SUNY/Buffalo aims at the development of (1) intellectual understanding of a set of concepts and principles which underlie the speech communication process; (2) attitudes, feelings and values which will contribute to effective interpersonal communication; and (3) skills of effective interpersonal communication.

Rationale. The course is built upon several interrelated orientations.

(1) Functional vs Purposeful Orientation. Communication is defined in terms of both function and purpose. Functionally, communication is defined as a basic, inevitable, and necessary biological process which functions to link man to his environment, develop his higher mental processes, and regulate his behavior. As so defined, communication is seen as largely unintentional and probably unteachable. Communication is also defined in terms of purpose, as the process of people relating to one another in order to pursue instrumental goals.

(2) Open-System Orientation. Human communication is viewed as a complex, adaptive quasi-open system. The mechanistic-reductionistic principles which characterize most of the more traditional approaches (simple causation, simple location, emphasis on matter, etc.) are rejected in favor of an organismic-holistic orientation, which focuses attention on the dynamic relationships among the parts of the system and between the system and its environment. The communication process and communication systems are described in terms of dynamic emergent process, mutual adaptation and influence, equifinality, irreversibility, nonrepeatability, negentropy, etc.

(3) Transactional Orientation. Speech communication is analyzed in terms of Dewey's transactional psychology and Mead's symbolic interactionism, with emphasis on the role of significant symbols in the development of the self and society.

(4) Rhetorical Choice. The student is encouraged to view interpersonal communication as the process of making rhetorical choices for the purpose of achieving instrumental ends.

Method. Class sizes range from 20-30 students. Course material is covered in textbooks, handouts, and class discussions. Most instructors avoid formal lectures. Role-playing, small group activity, informal and formal talks, and written assignments are used to promote further understanding and to develop skills and attitudes related to general communication principles. The course is taught from a common syllabus divided into five basic units:

1. The Communication Process
2. Meanings, Significant Symbols, and Interpersonal Communication
3. Communicating for Understanding
4. Communicating to Improve Interpersonal Relations
5. Communicating for Influence

Instructors. The course is taught almost entirely by graduate teaching assistants under the supervision of a faculty course director. Although a common syllabus and textbooks are used, the GTA's have considerable freedom in the management of their classes. Before being assigned to teach a section of the course, GTA's participate in an internship program.

Evaluation. A departmental final examination is used to determine about 30 percent of the student's grade. The remaining 70 percent of the grade is determined by the teacher of each section.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIATED MODULES AS PROPOSED FOR THE BEGINNING COLLEGE SPEECH COURSE

Prepared by
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Philosophy--

Traditionally, the beginning speech course in American colleges is a one semester course entitled "Public Speaking" or "Fundamentals of Speech". The former title describes the course offered here at SUNY--Plattsburgh wherein emphasis is placed on the theoretical aspects of oral communication as well as upon the improvement of both skill and confidence of each student to speak in public. "Fundamentals of Speech" usually encompasses a broader scope which presents the student with other forms of communication in addition to public speaking; i.e., oral interpretation, aspects of theatre arts, or aspects of voice science. The "fundamentals" approach may or may not include student platform assignments. What is common to virtually all introductory college speech courses today is that the individual classroom instructor is a specialist in only one area of the field of speech. Some have been trained in public address; others, in theatre, speech pathology, broadcasting, or television and film. Even within public address there are distinct subdivisions: rhetorical theorists, communication theorists, forensic specialists, and public address historians.

The problem confronting all colleges where the beginning course is multi-sectioned (here at SUCP there are seventeen sections of Speech 101) is to achieve relative uniformity in class content, course objectives, and quality of instruction when the professional interests of the staff are so varied. To help solve this problem at Plattsburgh we are presently employing a mass-lecture technique where the lectures are conducted by a senior staff member trained in public address and experienced in teaching the beginning course.

The philosophy behind this proposal attempts to solve two fundamental problems by administrators at any school with a sizable Speech Department. First, how can we present the highest quality as well as uniform content in lectures to our students? And, how can we present most effectively and most efficiently this quality education to our students--preferably, in a manner which releases time for our staff to pursue their own specialized interests and to provide more individual help to each student.

If the present mass lecture method were supplemented with a video-type lecture series, comprised of professors selected nationally for their scholarly proficiency in a given specialty as well as their ability to communicate to undergraduates, the quality of instruction available to the students enrolled in the basic speech course would significantly exceed the talent and resources available in any resident faculty. We here at Plattsburgh feel that we have an excellent faculty in the Speech and Theatre Department, but we recognize that around the

country certain scholars have distinguished themselves as specialists in aspects of the beginning speech course. To assemble even a fraction of these teachers on any one campus would be prohibitive in cost. To have a living library of video-tapes of these teachers presenting classroom lectures of their specialties would be not only most desirable but also economical in both the short and long term. Not only would students see the "high-priced talent" at a cost no greater than film rental, but individual instructors could be released from preparing fundamentals lectures, thus permitting them to teach more classes and more students without adversely affecting their teaching load. The students benefit by having America's best professors contribute significantly to their education; the faculty benefits by being able to concentrate in the area of their specialties; and, the college benefits by saving critically needed monies.

Historically, there are few lecturers who feel qualified or motivated to present lectures to classes of one hundred or more. However, if the instructor as well as the student believed the quality of instruction was not only as good but, perhaps, better in the mass lecture, then the monitary savings by mass lecturing becomes obvious. This proposal does satisfy both the instructor's and student's desire for quality instruction in a mass lecture format. Furthermore, it would encourage speech departments and faculty throughout the SUNY system to adopt the mass lecture format. A good instructor would be much more motivated to conduct mass lectures if he knew he had a library of video lectures by the best talent in the nation on which to rely. Leading discussions and question-answer periods in such an atmosphere could help even an experienced instructor to look good. Here at SUNY--Plattsburgh the mass lecture affords a savings of 1.2 faculty positions per year. This is based on seventeen recitation/performance sections of two credit hours each (34 credit hours course load) and two lecture sections of one credit hour each (2 credit hours course load) for a total of 36 credit hours. Since the normal instructor load is twelve class hours, this represents three full positions. Based on an F.T.E. ratio of 15:1 and an enrollment of 350 students for 3 credits each, there could be a 4.2 faculty justification, thus, the 1.2 faculty member savings per semester. It is savings such as this which is helping the Department of Speech and Theatre at SUNY--Plattsburgh to develop its pathology-audiology area as well as its total program without operating at an F.T.E. deficit.

Purpose--

This proposal establishes a series of lectures that can supplement existing college courses in speech. It should be clearly understood that this proposal does not attempt to construct a specific speech "course". Decisions bearing on course content, platform assignments, textbook selection, and other assigned readings should be made at the departmental level by the instructor(s) involved. Each proposed lecture or mediated module either individually or in combination with other modules functions as an instructional resource. The modules can replace the classroom lecturer or give him an additional method of presenting his course content. Most significantly they can encourage the implementation of mass lecture formats and they can provide an additional

series of cassettes for library use by individual students.

The video-modules will be of thirty minutes duration each. They will be produced by the Department of Instructional Resources and the Department of Speech and Theatre at SUNY--Plattsburgh. They will, as a series, comprise the subject matter normally contained in both the public speaking approach and the fundamentals of speech approach. Each individual speech class could then be patterned on the basis of what tapes in the series are appropriate to the course content and goals established to meet the student needs of each specific campus. In addition the tapes will be short enough to permit live classroom discussion and question-answer periods over the content. Desirably, the specific modules might be made available in a cassette for individual student viewing or library use.

The thrust of this proposal is aimed at improving both the content and the method of teaching the basic college speech course. It is based upon utilization of the best available modern technological facilities and the best available talent.

Methodology--

Essentially the methodology will be similar to that used in a pilot study already completed at SUNY--Plattsburgh, entitled, "Proposal for a Pilot Project Utilizing Video Tape Recordings for Selected Lessons in a Beginning Course in Public Speaking". Initial evaluation of the pilot project is very favorable.

Preliminary analysis reveals a need to develop twenty-two additional video-taped units to encompass the various lecture formats within a beginning speech course. An overview of these twenty-two units is attached to this proposal.

General Content--

The general content for each unit will be prescribed by the coordinators of the project. Such prescription assures that the objectives of the project can be most efficiently achieved. Due to the nature of content for the beginning course, usually two thirty-minute video-taped lectures will be prepared for each major division of subject matter. Each thirty-minute video tape will be an independent module and capable of being used with or without its related module. Such pairing of video-taped lessons lends itself to efficiency of instructor research and preparation. While it is desirable to utilize a different scholar for each module, this methodology is not necessary and certainly is not as economical. Thus, each scholar will be selected to do two lesson modules. Of necessity there will be a few exceptions where a scholar may do only one module.

Selection of Instructors--

Project coordinators will screen and acquire the services of the best talent available. Each instructor selected must meet three criteria: a) he must be nationally known in the field of speech;

b) he must be an effective, dynamic communicator; and, c) he must have an established interest in the specific unit(s) for which he is chosen. Each instructor will be requested to do two video-taped lectures. Dr. Winston L. Brembeck, University of Wisconsin; Dr. Waldo W. Braden, Louisiana State University; and, Dr. Wilbur E. Gilman, State University of New York, are exemplary of the instructors used in the pilot study. Preferably, additional talent will represent various areas of the nation.

Execution of the Project--

The total project is capable of being completed within a calendar year. Released time for the project coordinator would be necessary for at least one semester and preferably for the academic year. However, the project is capable of being completed even without released time but will take much longer. Essentially the following stages represent the development of the project:

1. Pilot Study--completed and in utilization at SUNY--Plattsburgh
2. Final Evaluation of Pilot Study--preliminary evaluation reveals high student and staff acceptance, high student interest, and significant basis that the final project will be most successful
3. General development of each of the twenty-two additional modules--four modules from the pilot study are considered as excellent and will be retained in the final project
4. Screening and selection of additional talent
5. Initial preparation and purchase of necessary video tapes and equipment as well as initial selection of supplementary visuals
6. Establishing of specific production dates for each module
7. Prior to the production date for any one module:
   a) Statement of general limits and objectives of each lesson and basic orientation of each selected instructor--via letters/telephone/visit to his campus
   b) Preparation period for each instructor (on his home campus)
   c) Follow-up orientation and establishing of pre-production video needs for each lesson
8. Actual production of lesson module by visiting instructor at the SUNY--Plattsburgh studios.
9. Immediate follow-up analysis to determine satisfactory completion of each module
10. Evaluation of project
11. Final implementation of the project at SUNY-Plattsburgh
12. Release of modules to total SUNY system
13. Possibly, release of modules nationally
14. Review and updating as necessary -- also reviews for national journals

Proposed Mediated Modules for the
Beginning Speech Course

Addendum I: An overview of the instructional content and proposed modules

UNIT	NO. OF MODULES	CONTENT
I.	1	"A Philosophy of Oral Communication" -- one module is proposed to encompass the nature of communication, the goals of the beginning speech course, and the basic models of the communication process.
II.	2	"The Nature of the Audience: Attitude Formation and Change" -- two modules are proposed to encompass attitudes and beliefs in audiences, concepts of attitude formation, persistence of attitudes, and message discrepancy and attitude change.
III.	2	"Source -- credibility, prestige, and personal proof" -- two modules will be designed to present concepts of ethos (definition and scope), the role of personal proof in the communicative act, the long-term effect of source-credibility and personal proof.
IV.	3	"The Role of Language in Communication" -- three video modules are proposed to encompass concepts of style and concepts of language in the communicative process (to which semantics, the meaning of language, its use and misuse are included).
V.	1	"Small Group Communication" -- one module will present basic communication theory involved in small group interaction.
VI.	2	"Message Preparation" -- two modules will present the source of messages; the relevance of the message to the speaker, to the audience, and to the occasion; channels and forms for presentation of messages; and, organization of messages.
VII.	2	"Message Preparation: Oral Style" -- these two modules would encompass aspects and modes of delivery, the utilization of audio-visual aids, and oral interpretation as related to style.

UNIT	NO. OF MODULES	CONTENT
VIII.	2	"Concepts of Interest, Attention, and Motivation in Message Preparation and Delivery" -- two modules are necessary to cover aspects of interest, attention, and motivation as each related to the introduction, body, and conclusion of the message.
IX.	2	"Concepts of Reasoning in Message Preparation" -- two video modules will encompass the meaning and selection of evidence and other supporting materials. tests of evidence and of the sources of evidence, methods of proof, and methodology in developing an issue.
X.	2	"Concepts and Persuasion in Message Preparation and Delivery" -- in this unit, the two proposed modules will encompass sociological and psychological concepts of persuasion and illustration and application of these concepts.
XI.	2	"Specialized Problems in Message Preparation and Delivery" -- subject content will encompass problems of communication in mediated messages, adaptation of audio-visual graphic materials for media, problems in preparing and delivering manuscript speeches and occasional speeches.
XII.	2	"Communication Problems of the Culturally Disadvantaged" -- two modules are proposed to help the culturally disadvantaged with their personal speech improvement.
XIII.	2	"Communication Problems in Cultural Minorities" -- two modules are proposed to meet the specialized needs of our cultural minorities.
XIV.	1	"Communication and the Speech Defective" -- one module is proposed to discuss aspects of speech defects and to provide insights as to what to do and where the student should go for professional help.